

5.10 Mineral Resources

This analysis focuses on mineral resource impacts associated with the adoption and implementation of the proposed General Plan, adoption and implementation of the revised Zoning Code and Subdivision Code, and adoption and implementation of the Magnolia Avenue Specific Plan, as these actions have the potential to affect mineral resources of the City. The Citywide Design Guidelines and Sign Guidelines only address site planning, building design and community aesthetics and are thus not considered relevant to this analysis.

Environmental Setting

The California Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975 (SMARA) requires that all cities incorporate into their general plans mapped mineral resources designations approved by the State Mining and Geology Board. SMARA was enacted to limit new development in areas with significant mineral deposits. The State Geologist classifies land in California based on availability of mineral resources. Because available aggregate construction material is limited, five designations have been established for the classification of sand, gravel and crushed rock resources:

- SZ – Scientific Resource area containing unique or rare occurrences of rocks, minerals or fossils that are of outstanding scientific significance.
- MRZ-1 – Mineral Resource Zone – adequate information indicates that no significant mineral deposits are present or likely to be present.
- MRZ-2 – Mineral Resource Zone – adequate information indicates that significant mineral deposits are present or there is a high likelihood for their presence and development should be controlled.
- MRZ-3 – Mineral Resource Zone – the significance of mineral deposits cannot be determined from the available data.
- MRZ-4 – Mineral Resource Zone – there is insufficient data to assign any other MRZ designation.

The classification system is intended to ensure consideration of statewide or regionally significant mineral deposits by the City in planning and development administration. These mineral designations are intended to prevent incompatible land use development on areas determined to have significant mineral resource deposits. Permitted uses within a mineral resource zone include mining, uses that support mining such as smelting and storage of materials, or uses that will not hinder future mining such as grazing, agriculture, large lot rural development, recreation, silviculture and open space.

The City of Riverside is responsible for designating Regionally Significant Construction Aggregate Resource Areas or identifying mineral resources to be conserved. **Figure 5-18**

Figure 5-18, Mineral Resources (8 ½ x 11, black and white)

shows the location of mineral resource areas within the Planning Area. In addition to these known concentrations, there are scattered areas throughout the Planning Area containing marginal deposits of feldspar, silica, limestone and other rock products.

Historically, the quarrying of granitic rock was a significant industry in the City of Riverside. These operations have not been active for decades, however, and there are no active mining operations within the 2004 City limits or Sphere of Influence.

As shown in Figure 5-18, the area between Market Street and Mission Boulevard between the Santa Ana River and Lake Evans is a State-classified mineral resource zone (MRZ-2). This mineral resource zone includes open space, the Camp Evans Boy Scout Camp and a portion of Fairmount Park; the entire area is close to Riverside's highly urbanized Downtown. While this area was once suitable for mining operations, the surrounding urban environment establishes inappropriate conditions for extraction and transport of mineral resources.

Thresholds for Determining Level of Impact

For the purposes of this EIR, a significant impact will occur if implementation of the General Plan will:

- Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the State; or
- Result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan.

Environmental Impact

Development pursuant to Project policies and regulatory standards will result in the addition of up to 38,100 dwelling units and 39.6 million square feet of non-residential construction over the 20-year horizon of the General Plan. When analyzing significant environmental impacts to mineral resources, two types of impact must be considered: (1) adverse impacts of urban development on future availability and transport of the resource, and (2) adverse impacts on urban development of potential increased mining, processing and transporting of construction aggregates.

The only State-classified MRZ-2 area of the City is shown in Figure 5-18.

The proposed General Plan Land Use Policy Map (Figure 5-17 in this EIR) provides for the preservation of the majority of MRZ-2 land as either open space or parks/recreation, both of which do not preclude mining activities.¹ The three General Plan designations for the MRZ-2 land are Open Space/Natural Resources, Public Parks and Public Facilities/Institutional.

¹ City of Riverside. 2004. General Plan, Land Use Policy Map.

The Open Space/Natural Resource designation assists in the protection of natural resources while maintaining open space for the protection of public health and safety. The Public Parks designation is assigned to parks that provide passive and active recreational opportunities. A small portion of the MRZ-2 area lies in Public Facilities/Institutional designation, which allows for schools, hospitals, libraries, utilities, and government institutions.

Both the Open Space/Natural Resource and Public Parks designations are fully compatible with the MRZ-2 area, and no impact will result. Although the Public Facilities/Institutional designation is potentially incompatible with the MRZ-2 area according to the City's Municipal Code,² specific sites for any public/semipublic uses on this site will be subject to discretionary approval. This land use designation is carried over from the City's 1994 General Plan; it is not a new feature of the Project. In any event, the surrounding area has been highly urbanized for nearly a century, and further mining in this area is not considered reasonably foreseeable. In sum, the impact on mineral resources is considered less than significant.

Impacts from construction of surface developments overlying mineral reserves and/or resources or land-use restrictions that prohibit their development would constitute a loss of valuable mineral resources. The deposits of feldspar, silica, limestone and other rock products scattered throughout the Planning Area are historic remnants of past mining activities, and the maximum potential for mineral extraction has occurred. As of 2004, no active mining operations exist or are permitted within the Planning Area. Implementation of the Project will not thus result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan.

The updated General Plan includes the following objectives and policies, the adherence to which will reduce potential environmental impacts to mineral resources:

Objective OS-1 Preserve and expand open space areas and linkages throughout the City and sphere of influence to protect the natural and visual character of the community and to provide for appropriate active and passive recreational uses.

Policy OS-1.1: Protect and preserve open space and natural habitat wherever possible.

Policy OS-1.2: Establish an open space acquisition program that identifies acquisition area priorities based on capital costs, operation and maintenance costs, accessibility, needs, resource preservation, ability to complete or enhance the existing open space linkage system and unique environmental features.

Policy OS-1.3: Work with Riverside County and adjacent cities, landowners and conservation organizations to preserve, protect and enhance open space and natural resources.

² City of Riverside. Municipal Code Chapter 5.46 Surface Mining and Reclamation, Section 5.46.020 Definitions.

The significance of impacts to mineral resources resulting from specific future development projects will be evaluated on a project-by-project basis. If project-level impacts are identified, specific mitigation measures will be required per CEQA.

At the programmatic level, there will be no impact to mineral resources as a result of the Project.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measure is necessary, as no significant impact will occur.

Level of Impact after Mitigation

With adherence to and implementation of the above General Plan policies, the Project's potential mineral resources impacts will be reduced below a level of significance at the programmatic level.

The significance of mineral resources impacts resulting from specific future development projects will be evaluated on a project-by-project basis. If project-level impacts are identified, specific mitigation measures will be required per CEQA.

References

City of Riverside. 2004. General Plan, Land Use Policy Map.

City of Riverside. Municipal Code Chapter 5.46 Surface Mining and Reclamation, Section 5.46.020 Definitions.